



# **Internal Audit Report**

## **Customer Service Review December 2003**



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# Maricopa County

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December 31, 2003

Fulton Brock, Chairman, Board of Supervisors  
Don Stapley, Supervisor, District II  
Andrew Kunasek, Supervisor, District III  
Max W. Wilson, Supervisor, District IV  
Mary Rose Wilcox, Supervisor, District V

We have completed our FY 2004 Customer Service Review. The survey tested an important aspect of customer service to our citizens, initial telephone and in-person response. The survey was performed in accordance with the annual audit plan approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Highlights of this report are:

- Ninety-five percent (95%) of our calls reached a courteous and professional employee or recording
- Ninety-four percent (94%) of the County sites we visited were open; of these open sites, ninety-eight percent (98%) had a person available to assist citizens

Within this report you will find an executive summary and detailed survey results. If you have any questions, or wish to discuss the information presented in this report, please contact Eve Murillo at 506-7245.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ross L. Tate".

Ross L. Tate  
County Auditor

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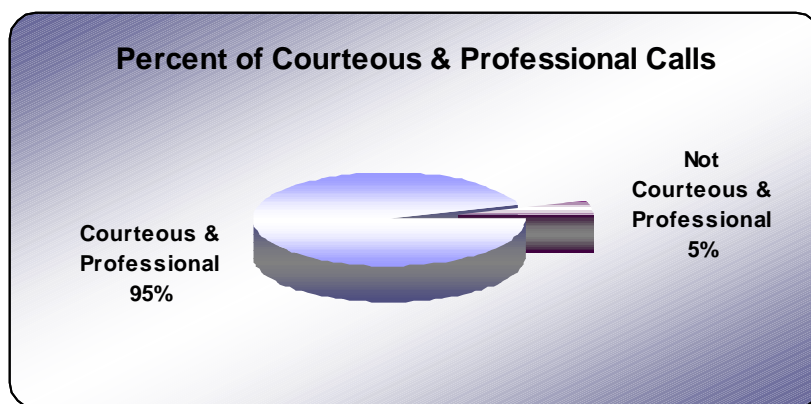
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# Executive Summary

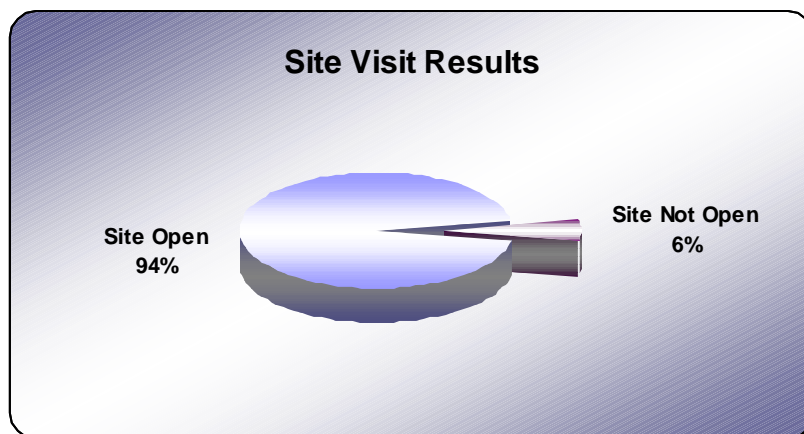
## Telephone Calls (Page 5)

We conducted a customer service telephone survey of 555 phone calls to 34 departments to test initial telephone response (availability, professionalism, courtesy). Ninety-five percent (95%) of our calls reached a courteous and professional employee or recording. However, we believe customer service to citizens could be improved by centralizing calls for related departments.



## Site Visits (Page 10)

We visited 52 County sites to test departments' availability to assist citizens. Ninety-four percent (94%) of the visited County sites were open (49 out of 52); of those that were open during business hours, ninety-eight percent (98%) had a person available to assist citizens, and ninety-six percent (96%) were courteous and professional. In three instances, an office was closed during business hours (two were relocated for remodeling with no posted sign and one was closed but unlocked with no one present). We recommend that, when closed, departments provide informational signs giving alternate locations and operational phone numbers.



**Maricopa County Report Card**  
**Initial Telephone Response, FY 2004 Survey**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Capital Facilities Development	A
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors	A
Community Development	A
Correctional Health	A
County Administration (CAO)	A
Finance	A
Government Affairs	A
Housing	A
Legal Defender	A
Materials Management	A
Medical Examiner	A
Parks & Recreation	A
Planning & Development	A
Public Defender	A
Research & Reporting	A
Stadium District	A
Technology Management (CIO)	A
Telecommunications	A
Facilities Management	A-
Public Health	A-

Adult Probation	B+
Environmental Services	B+
Flood Control District	B+
Juvenile Probation	B+
Library	B+
Transportation (MCDOT)	B+
Emergency Management	B
Human Resources	B
Public Fiduciary	B
Risk Management	B
Equipment Services	B-
Human Services	B-

Animal Care & Control	C+
Solid Waste Management	C+

# Introduction

## Background

Last year (FY 2003), at the request of the County Administrative Officer, Internal Audit conducted a limited customer service survey. The survey consisted of auditors posing as citizens and placing 210 phone calls and making 14 site visits to 17 County departments.

This year (FY 2004), Internal Audit conducted an expanded customer service survey that included 555 phone calls to 34 departments and 52 site visits to 18 departments. We conducted our telephone survey from September through October 2003 and documented the following:

- Number of rings
- Calls dropped or put on excessive hold
- If person answering the call identified the department
- Whether person answering was courteous and professional

## Methodology: Telephone Calls

We identified 275 County phone numbers using the same three public resources that are available to citizens:

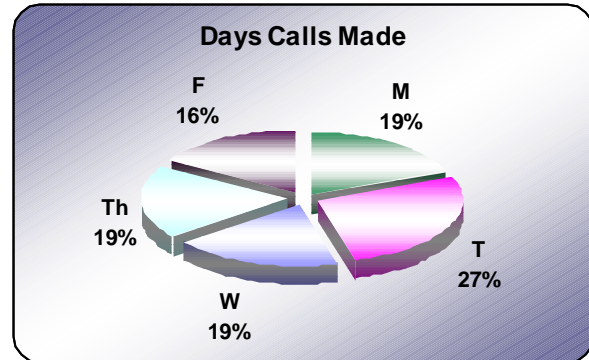
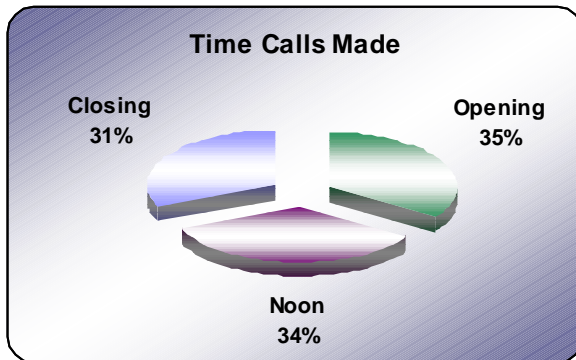
- Qwest telephone book (hardcopy)
- County website
- County Office of Communications booklet

We excluded elected departments, the health system, and some internal service numbers. We also eliminated fax, disconnected, and non-operating numbers. We made 555 telephone calls, contacting each number 2-3 times.

We called within the first 15 minutes of opening, closing, or during lunchtime (11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) and assumed an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. workday unless listed otherwise in one of our phone number sources.

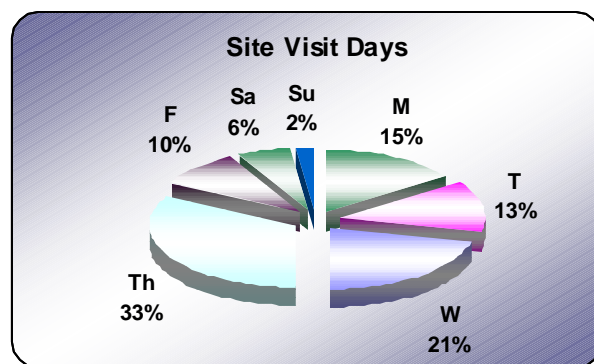
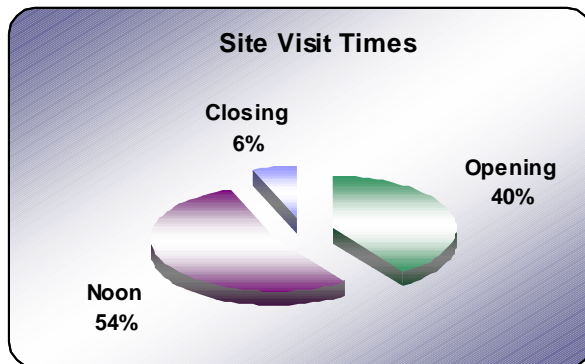
Departments keeping unusual hours (e.g., golf courses that open at sunrise and close at sunset) were contacted during normal business opening and closing times (8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.). We distributed calls evenly during business hours and among the five business days of the week, as depicted on the following page.





### Methodology: Site Visits

We selected 52 sites throughout the County to visit in person. We scheduled the visits close to opening and closing times or at lunchtime between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Most site visits were conducted on weekdays. We also conducted weekend site visits to libraries and parks. Our site visits also included two internal service departments. The charts below show visit distribution:



### Survey Scope & Limitations

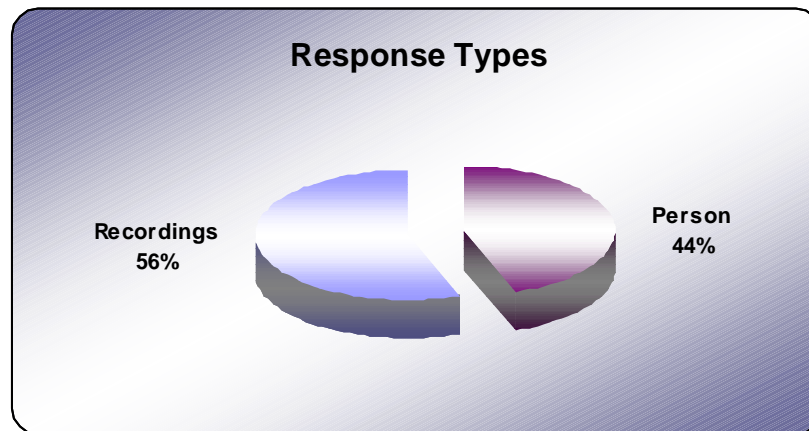
Our customer survey tests the effectiveness of the County's first point of contact with most residents, the initial phone response. This survey did not address:

- Ambiguous phone listing descriptions
- Transfers for specific questions
- Department processing time
- In-depth customer help

# Section 1 Telephone Calls

## Types of Calls

The 555 calls we placed were answered either by a person (237 calls), by a recording (297 calls), or not answered (21 calls). Ninety-three percent (93%) of the recorded calls offered the caller an option to reach a person or voice-mail, and the remaining seven percent (7%) were information only lines. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the recorded messages offered Spanish language options.

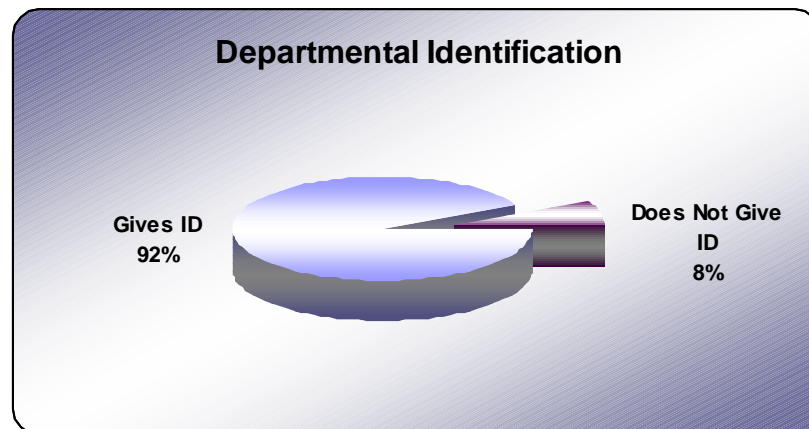


Note: The 21 unanswered calls (disconnected/non-working numbers) are not included in the charts.

## Results

### Departmental Identification

We tested whether County employees or recordings stated the name of their department as part of their standard greeting when answering the phone. The chart below shows that the majority of the responders did identify their department.



## Courteous and Professional

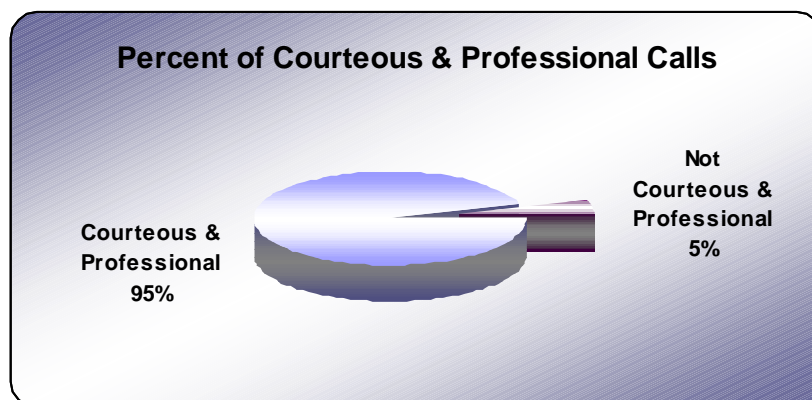
We also tested whether County employees in surveyed departments answered in a courteous and professional manner. We considered courteous and professional to include:

- Willingness to assist
- Patience with caller's questions
- Informative response to caller questions
- Service friendly attitude

A helpful and courteous employee at a Head Start site serving children said,  
"I have to go,  
I have a lot of babies!"

Although the majority of calls resulted in a courteous and professional outcome, some calls were determined to be unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory outcomes include:

- Extended hold times (in excess of 8 minutes in one case)
- Abrupt or hurried responses to the caller's questions
- Incorrect or obsolete instructions on recorded messages



## **Observations**

During the survey, we identified several factors that may affect citizen/customer satisfaction:

- Did County Employees Identify Themselves?

Employees state their department name and/or their own name, but omit "Maricopa County."

- Are Published Phone Numbers Current and Up-to-Date?

The phone book did not match the website for ten numbers among six departments, and 43 numbers on departmental websites are not published in the phone book.

- How Many Listed Numbers are Too Many?

Some departments had up to 45 published numbers, some with vague descriptions unlikely to be understandable to the general public. Seven departments comprised 75% of the phone numbers (205 numbers out of a total 275).

After indicating we had a wrong number, the employee said, "Oh no, this is a very good number. You'll like this number!"

- Should Departments Publish Direct Employee Lines?

We found several instances of outdated voice-mails and numerous instances in which the caller was asked to leave a message for a call back. Direct employee lines may not be the most appropriate contact point within a department.

## The Personal Touch

When calling two departments, a live person, no matter what time of day, courteously answered our calls. The departments are:

- Library District
- Public Defender Office

## Grading System & Report Card

We assigned grades to each department using the following criteria:

Telephone Call Criteria	Negative Points Assigned
No answer	-3
Person or recording is not courteous or professional	-3
Call took more than 6 rings for a live person or recording to answer	-1
Call dropped	-1
Excessive hold time	-1
No department identification	-1

Negative points for each department were totaled and divided by the number of phone calls made to that department. Overall, the departments did well in our telephone survey. Out of 34 departments, there were 20 A's, 12 B's, and 2 C's, as shown on the next page.

**Maricopa County Report Card**  
**Initial Telephone Response, FY 2004 Survey**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Capital Facilities Development	A
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors	A
Community Development	A
Correctional Health	A
County Administration (CAO)	A
Finance	A
Government Affairs	A
Housing	A
Legal Defender	A
Materials Management	A
Medical Examiner	A
Parks & Recreation	A
Planning & Development	A
Public Defender	A
Research & Reporting	A
Stadium District	A
Technology Management (CIO)	A
Telecommunications	A
Facilities Management	A-
Public Health	A-

Adult Probation	B+
Environmental Services	B+
Flood Control District	B+
Juvenile Probation	B+
Library	B+
Transportation (MCDOT)	B+
Emergency Management	B
Human Resources	B
Public Fiduciary	B
Risk Management	B
Equipment Services	B-
Human Services	B-

Animal Care & Control	C+
Solid Waste Management	C+



## Recommendations

Departments should:

- A. (Larger departments) consider reducing the number of phone number options available in the phone book
- B. Consider a Countywide Call Center model for centralizing calls for certain related departments (Flood Control, Planning and Development, and Transportation)
- C. Refrain from listing employees' direct lines in publications



Queen Creek Library

Some of the places  
we called and visited . . .



Human Services Department



Citizen Reviewing  
Telephone Book Information



Southeast Regional Library

## Section 2 Site Visits

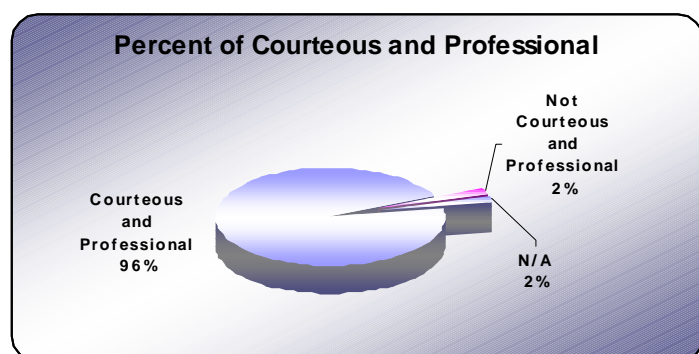
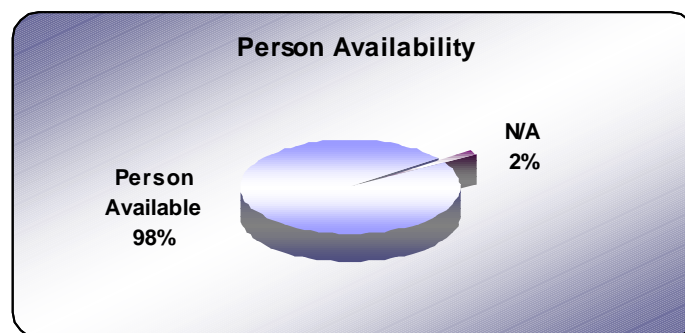
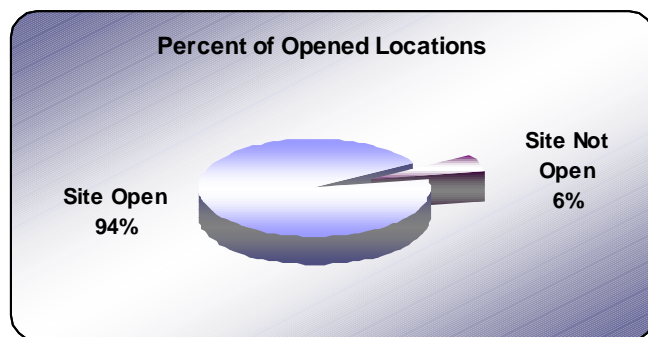
### Site Visits

We used three criteria to rate 52 site visits to 18 departments:

- Location is open
- Employees are available to provide service
- Employee assisting was courteous and professional

### Results

Most departments were open and offered courteous and professional assistance, however, we rated three visits as unsatisfactory. These sites were not open and there were no explanatory signs: two offices were relocated for remodeling; the third was closed but unlocked, with equipment and files visible but no one present.



The chart below identifies each department visited and the outcome for each criteria.

### Site Visit Results By Department, FY 2004

Department	# of Visits	Location Open	Person Available	Courteous & Professional
Adult Probation	14	14	14	14
Animal Care and Control	2	2	2	2
CAO	1	1	1	1
Clerk of the Board	1	1	1	1
Community Development	1	1	1	1
Correctional Health	1	1	1	1
Environmental Services	7	6	6 *	6 *
Finance	1	1	1	1
Human Resources	1	1	1	0
Human Services	6	5	5 *	5 *
Library	5	5	5	5
OMB	1	1	1	1
Parks & Recreation	3	3	2 **	2 **
Planning and Development	2	2	2	2
Public Defender	2	2	2	2
Public Fiduciary	1	1	1	1
Public Health	2	1	1 *	1 *
Research and Reporting	1	1	1	1

Note:

\* Unopened sites not rated unsatisfactory for person availability or courtesy/professional.

\*\* Remote County park site not intended for person availability, etc.

### Recommendation:

Departments should consider providing an informational sign for closed offices giving alternate locations and operational phone numbers.



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